

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00
INRE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03
NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 SSM-03
IO-13 /078 W

-----003697 300602Z /12/43

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FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6955

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

USMISSION USUN

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C O R R E C T E D C O P Y F O R T E X T

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PBOR, IS, US

SUBJECT: REACTION TO DEPARTMENT'S MIDDLE EAST STATEMENT

SUMMARY: ISRAEL'S REACTION TO THE DEPWRTMENT'S STATEMENT
ON JUNE 27 HAS BEEN IMMEDIATE AND VOCIFEROUS. WITH THE
EXCEPTION OF A FEW SCATTERED VOICES, THE GENERAL FEELING
IS SURPRISE AND DISMAY. GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS WERE QUICK
TO EXPRESS (USUALLY ANONYMOUSLY) BEWILDERMENT AND QUESTIONED
THE STATEMENT'S TIMING AND ITS SUBSTANCE. THEY PREOFESSED
TO SEE NO REASON TO JUSTIFY SUCH A PRONOUNCEMENT IN VIEW
OF BEGIN'S IMPENDING VISIT AND TOOK ISSUE WITH ITS IM-
PLICATION THAT THE BEGIN GOVERNMENT HAD FORECLOSED NEGOTIA-
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TIONS ON ANY SUBJECT. END SUMMARY

1. COMMENT ON THE STATEMENT HAS BEEN WIDELY FEATURED
IN THE PRESS AND THE EDITORIALS HAVE BEEN UNIVERSALLY
CRITICAL--ALTHOUGH HAARETZ SAW THE REFERENCE TO "HOME-
LAND" AS KEEPING OPEN THE JORDANIAN OPTION AND SAW THE
DOOR AJAR TO PARTIAL SETTLEMENTS IN THE TERM "STEPS

TO NORMALIZATION." RELEASE OF THE STATEMENT WAS SAID
TO BE A REVERSAL OF RECENT EVIDENCE THE U.S. ADMINISTRATION
WAS ENDEAVORING TO CREATE A SUITABLE ATMOSPHERE FOR THE
BEGIN VISIT BY AVOIDING CONTROVERSIAL RHETORIC.

2. OBSERVERS HAVE BEEN QUICK TO PERCEIVE IN THE STATEMENT'S
RELEASE A CHANGE OF EMPHASIS TOWARD ONE SIDED PRESSURE
ON ISRAEL. ACCORDING TO MAARIV'S EDITORIAL OF JUNE 28,
"THE AMERICAN SPOKESMAN'S ALLEGATION THAT THE ISRAELI
PRONOUNCEMENTS ABOUT NO WITHDRAWALS FROM JUDEA AND
SAMARIA CONSTITUTE A VIOLATION OF RESOLUTION 242 WAS
UTTERLY BIASED. NEVER HAS THE AMERICAN SPOKESMAN ACCUSED
ARAB PRONOUNCEMENTS THAT THE ISRAELI WITH DRAWAL MUST BE
COMPLETE AND ABSOLUTE AS BEING VIOLATIONS OF 242, EVEN
THOUGH THEY MAKE ANY NEGOTIATIONS ON BORDERS BOTH
SUPERFLUOUS AND IMPOSSIBLE." ALSO CRITICIZED BY THE
PRESS WAS WHAT THEY VIEWED AS PLAYING LOOSE WITH 242
AS SANCTIONING A PALESTINIAN "HOMELAND" WHILE GIVING
IT STRICT CONSTRUCTION REGARDING WITHDRAWAL. NOTING
WHAT IT SEES AS THE ABSENCE OF CENSURE IN WASHINGTON
TO ARAB THREATS OF WAR, DAVAR WONDERES WHETHER THE

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THE STATEMENT IS THE ADMINISTRATION'S REACTION AND FEARS THAT ARAB LEADERS WILL BET THE IMPRESSION THAT IT PAYS TO BRANDISH THE WAR OPTION.

3. THE MEDIA ALSO LOST NO TIME IN ALLEGING THAT THERE HAS BEEN EROSION IN THE U.S. POSITION ON THE NATURE OF PEACE. THEY HAVE DRAWN A DISTINCTION BETWEEN THE STATEMENT'S CONCENTRATION OF THE SPECIFICS OF TERRITORIAL WITHDRAWAL AND ITS VAGUE REFERENCE TO STEPS TO PEACE. THEY SEE AN INDICATION THAT THE U.S. IS MOVING TOWARD ACCEPTANCE OF THE ARAB POSITION ON PEACE --THAT IT IS TO BE LEFT FOR THE VAGUE FUTURE. ACCORDING TO HAARETZ (GOLAN): "RABIN'S ONLY ACHIEVEMENT IN WASHINGTON NOW IS IN PERIAL."
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4. ALTHOUGH THE PRESS AND OTHER OBSERVERS NOTE RECENT STATEMENTS BY BEGIN AND DAYAN APPARENTLY FORECLOSING ISRAEL WITHDRAWAL FROM THE WEST BANK, THEY HAVE TAKEN EXCEPTION TO THIS AS JUSTIFICATION FOR THE TONE AND CONTENT OF THE DEPARTMENT'S STATEMENT. FOR EXAMPLE, THE JERUSALEM POST WRITES, "THE LABORED ATTEMPT BY MR. BEGIN TO RECONCILE THE ONCE HATED RESOLUTION 242 WITH RETENTION OF THE ENTIRE WEST BANK IS A MERE VERBAL EXERCISE...THE STATE DEPARTMENT DOCUMENT, NEVERTHELESS, WELL AND SHOULD BE DENOUNCED AS A PERFECT EXAMPLE OF BLATANT PREJUDICE, BECAUSE THERE IS BARELY A HINT IN IT OF REMONSTRANCE WITH THE ARAB GOVERNMENTS FOR THEIR WELL PUBLICIZED PRECONDITIONS." THE POST REFERS TO THE STATEMENT "AS A COLD SHOWER OF WELCOME SPRING ON ISRAEL'S PREMIER."

5. ADDRESSING A CLOSED SESSION OF THE JEWISH AGENCY ASSEMBLY IN JERUSALEM ON JUNE 23, BEGIN MAINTAINED THAT THERE WAS NO POSITION WHICH COULD NOT BE NEGOTIATED FREELY. HE REPEATED HIS WELLKNOWN ASSERTION THAT ALL SIDES TO THE TALKS CAN RAISE ANY SUBJECT THEY WISH, "BUT WITHOUT ANY FORMULAS IMPOSED FROM WITHOUT."

6. INTERVIEWED ON TELEVISION LAST NIGHT, FORMER PRIME MINISTER RABIN CALLED THE STATEMENT "AN ACT OF UNPRECEDENTED IMPOLITENESS." RABIN ADDED THAT THE FORMULA OF THE PREVIOUS GOVERNMENT FOR EXPRESSING READINESS FOR TERRITORIAL COMPROMISE GAVE ISRAEL A BETTER BASIS FOR DIALOGUE WITH WASHINGTON THAN THE PRESENT GOVERNMENT'S FORMULA OF MAINTAINING THAT ALL TOPICS ARE OPEN TO NEGOTIATION. NONETHELESS, IT WAS A "GRAVE ANNOUNCEMENT AND...SIGNIFICANTLY

CONTRADICTS WHAT PRESIDENT CARTER TOLD ME IN
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MY TALK WITH HIM IN MARCH."

7. DISSENTING FROM THE WIDESPREAD EXPRESSION OF
SURPRISE WAS DMC LEADER YIGAL YADIN WHO REGRETTED THE
STATEMENT BUT ASSERTED THAT IT WAS TO BE EXPECTED THAT
THE U.S. WOULD NOT ACCEPT ANY KIND OF DECLARATION, IN
ADVANCE OF NEGOTIATIONS, THAT ISRAEL IS NOT PREPARED
FOR TERRITORIAL COMPROMISE IN EXCHANGE FOR PEACE.

8. IN THE CORRIDORS OF THE KNESSET YESTERDAY THE
DEPARTMENT STATEMENT WAS LIVELY SUBJECT OF CON-
VERSATION. BOTH GOVERNMENT AND OPPOSITION MK'S
MIRRORED THE CRITICISM CONTAINED IN THE PRESS. IN
DISCUSSIONS WITH AN EMBOFF ONE POLITICIAN TERMED IT
AN INSULT IN VIEW OF BEGIN'S IMPENDING VISIT, ADDING THAT
THIS WAS NOT THE SORT OF POINTED REMARKS THAT HAD PRE-
CEDED THE WASHINGTON VISITS OF ARAB LEADERS. LIKUD MK
MOSHE ARENS (EXPECTED TO BE NAMED CHAIRMAN OF THE
KNESSET FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND SECURITY COMMITTEE) CRITICIZED
WHAT HE SAW AS THE ENTIRE AMERICAN APPROACH TO THE
NEGOTIATION PROCESS AND WONDERED WHETHER ISRAEL WAS
BEING ABANDONED TO HER FATE--A STEP WHICH HE THOUGHT
HIGHLY DAMAGING TO U.S. INTERESTS. A CALMER APPROACH
WAS TAKEN BY SHELLI MK ARIEH ELIAV WHO GENERALLY WEL-
COMED THE DEPARTMENT'S PRONOUNCEMENT BUT STRESSED, WITH
APPARENT REFERENCE TO ITS WORDING ON PEACE, THAT SETTLE-
MENT OF THE CONFLICT HAS TO INVOLVE FORMAL AND COMPLETE
PEACE WITH MANIFOLD SECURITY ARRANGEMENTS AND GUARANTEES.
CONCERNING THE ACCEPTANCE OF NEAR TOTAL WITHDRAWAL,
ELIAV CANDIDLY ADMITTED THAT IN ISRAEL, HIS IS A VOICE
IN THE WILDERNESS.
LEWIS

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Message Attributes

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